

Statement on National Guard amendment

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, Markey 080.

Yesterday's Boston Globe contained a disturbing story reporting that an unidentified plane swooped close to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station on September 13, and that according to Vermont Governor Howard Dean, fighter jets sent to intercept the plane never found it. The flight provoked several 911 calls from concerned citizens.

On September 21, the NRC issued a press release that admitted that "the NRC did not specifically contemplate attacks by aircraft such as Boeing 757s or 767s and nuclear power plants were not designed to withstand such crashes. Detailed engineering analyses of a large airliner crash have not yet been performed.

My amendment does 2 things to respond to the immediate security needs at nuclear reactors. It says that when the country is in a state of war or national emergency, the President has the authority to establish no-fly-zones over nuclear reactors, as well as the authority to station National Guard troops at nuclear reactors.

The National Guard has already been deployed at airports, and I believe that given the events of September 11, and the horrific consequences of a similar attack on a nuclear reactor, that we need to do whatever we can to address the immediate threat. I urge adoption of my amendment.